
+THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF UTAH

FRANKLIN ERIC HALLS,

Plaintiff,

v.

COLLEEN MAGEE,

Defendant.

**MEMORANDUM DECISION &
ORDER TO CURE DEFICIENT
AMENDED COMPLAINT**

Case No. 4:22-CV-97-DN

District Judge David Nuffer

Plaintiff, inmate Franklin Eric Halls, brings this *pro se* civil-rights action. See 42 U.S.C.S. § 1983 (2023). Having now screened the Amended Complaint, (ECF No. 21), under its statutory review function, 28 U.S.C.S. § 1915A (2023), the Court orders Plaintiff to file a second amended complaint to cure deficiencies before further pursuing claims.

AMENDED COMPLAINT'S DEFICIENCIES

The Amended Complaint:

(a) does not properly affirmatively link some specific civil-rights violations to Defendant Magee. (See below.)

(b) appears to improperly names a prosecutor as a defendant, apparently without considering prosecutorial immunity. (See below.)

(c) asserts claims likely invalidated by the rule in *Heck*. (See below.)

(d) possibly asserts claims attacking the validity of conviction and sentence, which should, if at all, be brought in habeas-corpus petition, not a civil-rights complaint.

GUIDANCE FOR PLAINTIFF

Rule 8 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure requires a complaint to contain "(1) a short and plain statement of the grounds for the court's jurisdiction . . . ; (2) a short and plain

statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief; and (3) a demand for the relief sought." Rule 8's requirements mean to guarantee "that defendants enjoy fair notice of what the claims against them are and the grounds upon which they rest." *TV Commc'ns Network, Inc. v ESPN, Inc.*, 767 F. Supp. 1062, 1069 (D. Colo. 1991).

Pro se litigants are not excused from meeting these minimal pleading demands. "This is so because a pro se plaintiff requires no special legal training to recount the facts surrounding his alleged injury, and he must provide such facts if the court is to determine whether he makes out a claim on which relief can be granted." *Hall v. Bellmon*, 935 F.2d 1106, 1110 (10th Cir. 1991). Moreover, it is improper for the Court "to assume the role of advocate for a pro se litigant." *Id.* Thus, the Court cannot "supply additional facts, [or] construct a legal theory for plaintiff that assumes facts that have not been pleaded." *Dunn v. White*, 880 F.2d 1188, 1197 (10th Cir. 1989).

Plaintiff should consider these general points before filing an amended complaint:

(i) The revised complaint must stand entirely on its own and shall not refer to, or incorporate by reference, any portion of the original complaint. *See Murray v. Archambo*, 132 F.3d 609, 612 (10th Cir. 1998) (stating amended complaint supersedes original). The amended complaint may also not be added to after it is filed without moving for amendment. Fed. R. Civ. P. 15.

(ii) The complaint must clearly state what each individual defendant--typically, a named government employee--did to violate Plaintiff's civil rights. *See Bennett v. Passic*, 545 F.2d 1260, 1262-63 (10th Cir. 1976) (stating personal participation of each named defendant is essential allegation in civil-rights action). "To state a claim, a complaint must 'make clear exactly who is alleged to have done what to whom.'" *Stone v. Albert*, 338 F. App'x 757, 759 (10th Cir. 2009) (unpublished) (emphasis in original) (quoting *Robbins v. Oklahoma*, 519 F.3d 1242, 1250

(10th Cir. 2008)). Plaintiff should also include, as much as possible, specific dates or at least estimates of when alleged constitutional violations occurred.

(iii) Each cause of action, together with the facts and citations that directly support it, should be stated separately. Plaintiff should be as brief as possible while still using enough words to fully explain the "who," "what," "where," "when," and "why" of each claim. *Robbins*, 519 F.3d at 1248 ("The [Bell Atlantic Corp. v.] *Twombly* Court was particularly critical of complaints that 'mentioned no specific, time, place, or person involved in the alleged [claim].'" [550 U.S. 544, 565] n.10 (2007). Given such a complaint, 'a defendant seeking to respond to plaintiff's conclusory allegations . . . would have little idea where to begin.' *Id.*").

(iv) Plaintiff may not name an individual as a defendant based solely on supervisory position. *See Mitchell v. Maynard*, 80 F.2d 1433, 1441 (10th Cir. 1996) (stating supervisory status alone does not support § 1983 liability).

(v) Grievance denial alone with no connection to "violation of constitutional rights alleged by plaintiff, does not establish personal participation under § 1983." *Gallagher v. Shelton*, 587 F.3d 1063, 1069 (10th Cir. 2009).

(vi) "No action shall be brought with respect to prison conditions under . . . Federal law, by a prisoner confined in any jail, prison, or other correctional facility until such administrative remedies as are available are exhausted." 42 U.S.C.S. § 1997e(a) (2023). However, Plaintiff need not include grievance details in the complaint. Exhaustion of administrative remedies is an affirmative defense that must be raised by defendants. *Jones v. Bock*, 549 U.S. 199, 216 (2007).

• **Affirmative Link**

[A] plaintiff who brings a constitutional claim under § 1983 can't obtain relief without first satisfying the personal-participation

requirement. That is, the plaintiff must demonstrate the defendant "personally participated in the alleged constitutional violation" at issue. *Vasquez v. Davis*, 882 F.3d 1270, 1275 (10th Cir. 2018). Indeed, because § 1983 is a "vehicle[] for imposing personal liability on government officials, we have stressed the need for careful attention to particulars, especially in lawsuits involving multiple defendants." *Pahls v. Thomas*, 718 F.3d 1210, 1225 (10th Cir. 2013); *see also Robbins v. Oklahoma*, 519 F.3d 1242, 1250 (10th Cir. 2008) (explaining that when plaintiff brings § 1983 claims against multiple defendants, "it is particularly important . . . that the complaint make clear exactly *who* is alleged to have done *what to whom*"); *Tonkovich v. Kan. Bd. of Regents*, 159 F.3d 504, 532-33 (10th Cir. 1998)) (holding that district court's analysis of plaintiff's § 1983 claims was "infirm" where district court "lump[ed]" together plaintiff's claims against multiple defendants--"despite the fact that each of the defendants had different powers and duties and took different actions with respect to [plaintiff]"--and "wholly failed to identify specific actions taken by particular defendants that could form the basis of [a constitutional] claim").

Estate of Roemer v. Johnson, 764 F. App'x 784, 790-91 (10th Cir. 2019).

"A plaintiff's failure to satisfy this requirement will trigger swift and certain dismissal."

Id. at 790 n.5. Indeed, the Tenth Circuit has "gone so far as to suggest that failure to satisfy the personal-participation requirement will not only justify dismissal for failure to state a claim; it will render the plaintiff's claim frivolous." *Id.*

• **Prosecutorial Immunity**

Prosecutors acting within the scope of their duties enjoys absolute immunity from suit under § 1983. *Imbler v. Pachtman*, 424 U.S. 409, 424 (1976). The prosecutors' acts, as alleged by Plaintiff, apparently relate to advocacy in court. Prosecutor defendants therefore may be entitled to absolute prosecutorial immunity from this lawsuit.

• ***Heck***

Plaintiff's claims appear to include some allegations that if true may invalidate Plaintiff's conviction or sentence, if Plaintiff has been convicted and sentenced. "In *Heck*, the Supreme Court explained that a § 1983 action that would impugn the validity of a plaintiff's [incarceration] cannot be maintained unless the [basis for incarceration] has been reversed on direct appeal or impaired by collateral proceedings." *Nichols v. Baer*, 315 F. App'x 738, 739 (10th Cir. 2009) (unpublished) (citing *Heck v. Humphrey*, 512 U.S. 477, 486-87 (1994)). *Heck* keeps litigants "from using a § 1983 action, with its more lenient pleading rules, to challenge their conviction or sentence without complying with the more stringent exhaustion requirements for habeas actions." *Butler v. Compton*, 482 F.3d 1277, 1279 (10th Cir. 2007) (citation omitted). *Heck* clarifies that "civil tort actions are not appropriate vehicles for challenging the validity of outstanding criminal judgments." 512 U.S. at 486.

Plaintiff argues that Plaintiff's constitutional rights were breached in a way that may attack Petitioner's very imprisonment. *Heck* requires that, if a plaintiff requests § 1983 damages, this Court must decide whether judgment for the plaintiff would unavoidably imply that Plaintiff's incarceration is invalid. *Id.* at 487. Here, it appears it may on some claims. If this Court were to conclude that Plaintiff's constitutional rights were violated in a prejudicial manner, it would be stating that Plaintiff's incarceration was not valid. Thus, the involved claims "must be dismissed unless the plaintiff can demonstrate that the conviction or sentence has already been invalidated." *Id.* This has possibly not happened and may result in dismissal of such claims.

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

(1) Plaintiff must within thirty days cure the Amended Complaint's deficiencies noted above by filing a document entitled, "Second Amended Complaint," that does not refer to or include any other document.

(2) The Clerk's Office shall mail Plaintiff the Pro Se Litigant Guide with a blank-form civil-rights complaint which Plaintiff must use if Plaintiff wishes to pursue an amended complaint.

(3) If Plaintiff fails to timely cure the above deficiencies according to this Order's instructions, this action will be dismissed without further notice.

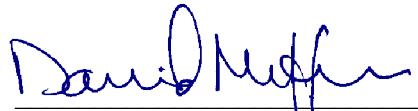
(4) The amended complaint shall not include any claims **(a)** occurring past the date of the Complaint, filed December 19, 2022, and **(b)** outside the allegations of transactions and events contained in the Amended Complaint, (ECF No. 21). The Court will not address any such new claims or outside allegations, which will be dismissed. If Plaintiff wishes to raise other claims and allegations, Plaintiff may do so only in a new complaint in a new case. If an amended complaint is filed, the Court will screen it for dismissal or an order effecting service upon valid defendants who are affirmatively linked to valid claims.

(5) Plaintiff shall not try to serve the second amended complaint on Defendant Magee; instead, the Court will perform its screening function and determine itself whether the second amended complaint warrants service or dismissal (in part or in full). No motion for service of process is needed. *See 28 U.S.C.S. § 1915(d) (2023) ("The officers of the court shall issue and serve all process, and perform all duties in [in forma pauperis] cases.").*

(6) Plaintiff's motion for service of process is **DENIED**. (ECF No. 19.) Based on the above analysis and order, there is no valid complaint on file at this time.

Signed January 8, 2024.

BY THE COURT



David Nuffer
United States District Judge